

BELL PEPPERS

Vegetable of the Month September



Bell peppers are a great source of vitamin C. If you thought citrus fruits packed a powerful punch when it comes to being a good source of vitamin C, peppers have them beat. Green peppers have twice the amount of vitamin C by weight than citrus fruits, and this powerful punch of vitamin C is an antioxidant that may be effective in preventing certain cancers. Red bell peppers have three times as much vitamin C as the green varieties and are a good source of beta carotene.

Green Bell Pepper

Serving Size 1/2 cup (75g/2.7oz)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 20 Calories from Fat 1

		% Daily Value*
Total Fat	0.14g	0%
Sodium	1.5mg	0%
Potassium	132mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate	5g	1%
	Dietary Fiber 1.34g	3%
Protein	1g	
Vitamin A	5%	Vitamin C 112%

Red Bell Pepper

Vitamin A 47% Vitamin C 236%

Yellow Bell Pepper

Vitamin A 2% Vitamin C 230%

Notice: Not all peppers are created equal. Yellow and red peppers contain more vitamin C than green peppers, and red peppers contain quite a bit more vitamin A than yellow and green peppers.

Varieties: Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder. Red bell peppers contain eleven times more beta carotene than green bell peppers.

How To Select: Bell peppers are available and are in good supply all year, but they are more plentiful and less expensive during the summer months. Fresh peppers come in variety of colors, shapes, and sizes, but when selecting them, they all follow the same guidelines. Their skin should be firm without any wrinkles, and the stem should be fresh and green. They should feel heavy for their size. Avoid peppers with sunken areas, slashes or black spots.

Storage: Store unwashed bell peppers in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. They will stay fresh for about a week. Green bell peppers will stay fresh a little longer than the yellow and red ones.



Make Bell Peppers Part of Your 5 A DAY Plan

It is easy to include bell peppers in your 5 A Day Plan. Use them to create colorful and exciting meals by adding a mixture of different colored sliced or chopped peppers to your favorite salads, pastas, and Chinese or Mexican dishes. They can be used as a colorful garnish. Include sliced peppers on your next veggie tray. Carve out peppers and stuff them with rice or use them as colorful containers for dips or other edible items.

Recipes

Roasted Peppers

To add a delightfully smoky flavor to pasta dishes, pizza, and brochette, bell peppers can be grilled on a barbecue grill, over the flame of a gas range burner, or broiled in the oven.

To prepare peppers, cut a small slit near the stem of each pepper. If grilling, secure pepper to a long-handled fork and hold over flame turning pepper until skin becomes blackened. If using an oven, broil peppers 4 inches away from heating element. After skin has blackened, immediately place peppers in a zip-lock bag for 15 minutes to allow them to steam. Remove pepper from bag and scrape the skin off using a table knife. Remove stem, core, and remove seed from pepper.

Turkey-Apple Gyros

- 1 medium golden delicious apple, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup thinly sliced onion
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 medium green bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 8 ounces cooked turkey breast, cut into thin strips
- 6 whole wheat pita bread rounds, lightly toasted
- 1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 garlic clove minced

Toss apple with lemon juice; set aside. In a large nonstick skillet, cook onion and peppers in hot oil stirring frequently until crisp-tender. Stir in turkey; cook and stir until heated through. Stir in apple mixture. Add garlic to yogurt and mix. Fold pitas in half and fill with turkey mixture. Drizzle with yogurt mixture. Makes 6 servings.

Nutritional Analysis per serving: Calories 194, Total Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 0.7g, Carbohydrates 35g, Protein 9g, Cholesterol 7mg, Fiber 1g, Sodium 192mg.
Carbohydrates 67% Protein 18% Fat 15%

Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers

- 4 red or green bell peppers
- 1 pint or 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves

3 garlic cloves
2 tsp. olive oil
1/4 tsp. Salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly oil a large shallow baking pan. Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Arrange peppers cut sides up in baking pan and lightly oil cut edges of stems. Halve cherry tomatoes and chop onion and basil. Finely chop garlic. In a bowl toss tomatoes, onion, basil, garlic, 2 tbsp. oil, salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture among peppers and roast in upper third of oven until peppers are tender, about 20 minutes. Serves 8.

Nutritional Analysis per serving: Calories 41, Total Fat 1.4g, Saturated Fat 0.3g, Carbohydrates 7g, Protein 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Fiber 2g, Sodium 78mg.

Carbohydrates 63% Protein 10% Fat 27%



Turkey and Rice Stuffed Peppers

2 large green peppers
3/4 pound ground turkey
1/3 cup chopped onion
1 71/2-ounce can tomatoes, cut up
1/3 cup long grain rice
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 tsp. dried basil or dried oregano, crushed
1/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Cut peppers in half lengthwise, remove stems, membranes, and seeds. Immerse peppers into boiling water for 3 minutes. Invert them on paper towels and drain

well. Cook meat and onion in a skillet until meat is brown and onions are tender. Drain fat. Stir in undrained tomatoes, uncooked rice, Worcestershire sauce, basil, 1/2 cup water, 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 15-18 minutes or until rice is tender. Fill peppers with meat mixture. Sprinkle cheese over meat mixture of each pepper. Place peppers in an 8X8X2-inch baking dish with any remaining meat mixture. Bake at 375° oven for about 15 minutes or until heated through. Let stand 1-2 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional Analysis per serving: Calories 235, Total Fat 8g, Saturated Fat 2g, Carbohydrates 22g, Protein 19g, Cholesterol 70mg, Fiber 3g, Sodium 458mg.
Carbohydrates 37% Protein 33% Fat 30%